

**CHRISTIAN SERVICE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, KUMASI**

**DEPARTMENT OF THEOLOGY**



**THE ROLE OF THE EVANGELIST IN CHURCH PLANTING IN RURAL  
AREAS OF THE GWIRA DISTRICT OF THE WESTERN REGION OF GHANA.**

**PROJECT WORK  
(LONG ESSAY)**

**BY  
JUSTICE ASARE**

**JULY, 2015.**

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AREAS OF THE GWIRA DISTRICT OF WESTERN REGION GHANA.**

**BY**

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**A long essay submitted to Christian Service University College, in partial  
fulfillment of the requirement for the award of the degree of Bachelor of Arts in  
Theology with Administration.**

**JULY, 2015.**

## DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this Long Essay has been prepared by myself, that it has not been submitted in any previous application for a degree, that the work is a record of what has been done by myself, that all quotations have been distinguished by either quotation marks or indentation and all the sources of information have specifically been acknowledged by means of footnotes.

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## **DEDICATION**

This work is dedicated to Almighty God for his guidance, unfailing love and providential care. Again, to my wife Mrs. Victoria Asare and my children Ebenezer Andoh Asare, Graham Andoh Asare and Mathias Gustov Andoh Asare.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

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## CHAPTER ONE

### GENERAL INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background of the Study

The vigorous continual planting of new churches is the single most crucial strategy for the numerical growth of the body of Christ in a community and the continual corporate renewal and revival of the existing churches. According to Timothy Keller, “nothing else—not crusades, outreach programs, parachurch ministries, growing megachurches, congregational consulting, nor church renewal processes, will have the consistent impact of dynamic, extensive church planting”.<sup>1</sup>

Essentially all of the great evangelistic challenges of the New Testament are basically calls to plant churches, not simply to share the faith. The Great Commission (Matt. 28:18–20) is a call not just to “make disciples” but to baptize. In Acts and elsewhere, it is clear that baptism means incorporation into a worshiping community with accountability and boundaries (cf. Acts 2:41–47). It can be argued that the only way it can increase the number of Christians in any given area is to increase the number of churches. Much traditional evangelism aims to get a “decision” for Christ. Experience, however, shows us that many of these decisions disappear and never result in changed lives. Many decisions are not really conversions but are only the beginning of a journey of seeking God. Only a person who is being evangelized in the context of an ongoing worshiping and shepherding community can be sure of finally coming home into vital, saving faith.

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<sup>1</sup>Timothy Keller, *Why Plant Churches?* [file:///C:/Users/jen/Desktop/Why\\_Plant\\_Churches-1%20\(1\).pdf](file:///C:/Users/jen/Desktop/Why_Plant_Churches-1%20(1).pdf) (accessed on 20<sup>th</sup> April, 2015).

This is why a leading missiologist like Peter C. Wagner can say, “Planting new churches is the most effective evangelistic methodology known under heaven.”<sup>2</sup>

The greatest missionary in history, Saint Paul, had a rather simple twofold strategy. First, he went into the largest city of a region (cf. Acts 16:9, 12), and second, he planted churches in each city (cf. Titus 1:5—“appoint elders in every town”). Once Paul had done that, he could say that he had “fully preached” the gospel in a region and that he had “no more place . . . to work in these regions” (cf. Rom. 15:19, 23). This implies that in one way or the other Paul had two controlling assumptions that, the way to most permanently influence a country was through its chief cities, and the way to most permanently influence a city was to plant churches in it. Once he had accomplished this in a city, he moved on. He knew that the rest that needed to happen would follow.

Keller argues that the success of new churches often challenges older congregations to evaluate themselves in substantial ways. Sometimes it is only in contrast with a new church that older churches can finally define their own vision, specialties, and identity. Often the growth of the new congregation gives the older churches hope that “it can be done,” and it may even bring about humility and repentance for defeatist and pessimistic attitudes.<sup>3</sup>

Church planting clearly demonstrates that church growth is possible. When a new church is planted, there is now either a new church community where there had been none before; or a stronger, larger church community than before the church planting was started.

Generally, one of the main and core elements that inspires any church planting activity is evangelism. Through evangelism, the gospel is sent out to people in their various

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<sup>2</sup>Peter C. Wagner, *Frontiers in Missionary Strategy* (Chicago, Moody Press, 1971), 4.

<sup>3</sup>Keller, *Why Plant Churches?*, 2.

communities and after acceptance of the gospel message, churches are created or established to accommodate the new converts. This aspect of church planting brings out the major role that an evangelist has to play in the church planting process.

The evangelist as the messenger of God with God's word to proclaim cannot be undermined in the church planting process. The researcher therefore seeks to undertake this major task to find out the role of the evangelist in church planting with particular reference to Gwira district.

## **1.2 Statement of Problem**

Following the command of Jesus to His disciples in the Great Commission (Matt. 28:18-20), we believe that all followers of Jesus are called to make disciples who make disciples to the glory of God. This means two things; firstly, Jesus sends us out on mission. Multiplication through the proclamation of the Gospel is what we are called to do.

Furthermore, Jesus commands His disciples to 'baptise', which means incorporation into the church community (Acts 2:41-47), and to 'teach', which is the ongoing building up of believers in the church community (Col. 1:28). The commission of Jesus is that one would be sent as communities on mission for the multiplication of disciples through the multiplication of church communities that is church planting.

However, in most Christian outreach programmes that seeks to evangelize, baptize and plant churches, the evangelists are not seen as playing much and effective roles. In most cases, it is either they don't know their roles or they have been sidelined by their churches in the process. The researcher sees these as major consequences that can be very detrimental to the spread of the gospel and the planting of churches as well.

### **1.3 Research Questions**

1. What is Church Planting?
2. What accounts for church planting in rural areas of Gwira District in the western region?
3. What are the roles of an evangelist in the church planting?

### **1.4 Objectives of the Study**

1. To find out about the concept of Church Planting.
2. To investigate and find out about factors that account for church planting in rural areas of Gwira district of the western region.
3. To examine the roles of an evangelist in Church planting.

### **1.5 Scope and Focus of the Study**

This work looks at the issue of church planting in rural areas with a particular attention to the Gwira district of the western region of Ghana. The work particularly focuses on the role of an evangelist in church planting in rural areas. The work further touches on the issues that account for church planting in the Gwira district. The work also seeks to touch on the brief historical background of mission work or church planting in the Gwira district.

### **1.6 Research Methodology**

This is a qualitative study and will employ a phenomenological and historical approach.

A phenomenological study involves trying to understand the essence of a phenomenon by examining the views of people who have experienced that phenomenon. Or it examines human experiences through the descriptions provided by the people involved.

These experiences are called lived experiences. The goal of phenomenological studies is to describe the meaning that experiences hold for each subject.<sup>4</sup>

Historical studies concern the identification, location, evaluation, and synthesis of data from the past. Historical research seeks not only to discover the events of the past but to relate these past happenings to the present and to the future.<sup>5</sup> These methods are relevant for the study in the sense that it enabled the researcher to analyze the issues that remain very central to this work. The phenomenological approach was also used to examine the issues of church planting in the Gwira district of the western region. The researcher also employed the historical approach in looking at the mission in terms of the planting of churches in the Gwira district.

### **1.6.1 Methods of Data Collection**

Obviously, a research work of this nature cannot be done in a vacuum. Therefore, the researcher seeks to adopt some methods of data collection that will help collate and analyze data that were gathered from the study. These include both primary sources and secondary sources.

#### ***1.6.1.2 Primary Sources***

The researcher used structured and unstructured interview. The personal interview include having a personal interaction ‘one on one’ with a respondent. The interviews enabled the researcher and respondents to develop a personal friendship and rapport<sup>6</sup> which also created a conducive environment for the researcher to meet the respondents face to face to elicit relevant pieces of primary information.

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<sup>4</sup>Barbara M. Wildemuth, ‘Understanding and Evaluating Qualitative Research’, *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 63 (1995), 881.

<sup>5</sup> A. L. Strauss & J. M. Corbin, *Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., (California: Sage Publications, 1998), 11.

<sup>6</sup>Tom K. B. Kumekpor, *Research Methods and Techniques of Social Research: Sections 1 - 3* (Accra: SonLife Press, 2002), 189.

### ***1.6.1.3 Secondary Sources***

Because of the focus and scope of the study, the researcher had to consult different secondary sources encompassing books, thesis, journals, articles et cetera relevant to this work. These are published and unpublished materials of scholarly opinion. In addition, relevant use were made of, dictionaries, encyclopedia, newspaper publication and articles. The secondary sources will help in a way to collate and analyze the various views on the issue of church planting in the Gwira district.

### ***1.6.2 Sample/Sampling Technique***

In this study, the researcher employed the purposive sampling technique to select his respondents. In his work, *Research Methods Techniques of Social Research*, Tom K.B. Kumekpor states that in purposive sampling, “the units of the sample are selected not by a random procedure, but they are intentionally picked for study because they satisfy certain qualities which are not randomly distributed but they are typical or they exhibit most of the characteristics of interest to the study.”<sup>7</sup> The categories of people that the researcher interviewed included evangelists who have worked on the Gwira district, resident’s pastors and church leaders of churches in the district and any other authority in the area of church planting whose views helped to analyze issues that are very important to this study. These respondents were selected on the basis that they possess relevant information and draw opinions that were considered to be essential to the study.

### ***1.6.3 Data Analysis***

In evaluating the data that was gathered during fieldwork, a qualitative analysis was employed. This method relies on the quality of the information based on its relevance to

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<sup>7</sup> Kumekpor, *Research Methods and Techniques of Social Research*, 72.

the subjects being studied rather than on the quantity of responses to a particular issue.<sup>8</sup> That is, instead of drawing from a large representative sample, the researcher sought to acquire in-depth and intimate information from relatively smaller group of people. This method of data analysis is also employed since the researcher dwells largely on interviews which are intended to elicit detailed information from individual respondents.

## **1.7 Literature Review**

For the literature review, the researcher reviewed works on thematic areas that was very relevant for the study. The researcher sort to review works under such heading because it helps to understand some of the issues that remain very central to this study. These areas are discussed below;

### **1.7.1 Church Planting and the Church Strategy**

Dan Kimball identifies a young generation, globalized, post-modern and post-church in North America that admires Jesus but is repelled by the Church. Such identification was crucial for the process of church planting that spread over various parts of America.<sup>9</sup> A preaching that started from the church as people and not the church as an institution. Their evangelistic programs were always outside the church building. The proclamation of Christ concentrated on His purity and truth. During the discipling, however, biblical concepts of the Church were introduced that is its nature and limitations.

Without research and understanding of the local society Kimball certainly would not have reached thousands and thousands of young people that would normally never enter

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<sup>8</sup> Wildemuth, 'Understanding and Evaluating Qualitative Research', *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 63, 881.

<sup>9</sup> Dan Kimball, *They like Jesus, But Not the Church* (NY: Zondervan, 2007), 2.

a church building and who had a clear resistance to a message presented by the Church. But they were open to Jesus.<sup>10</sup>

In his article ‘The Implanting of Healthy Churches—the best strategy’ Rubens Muzio proposes some steps for a research survey of the socio-cultural and historical context of a city and that might also be employed in the rural areas.

- a) Collect the available and previously compiled statistics that point out the different religious, historical, social and cultural realities of the city and neighborhood.
- b) Get hold of a strategic map of urban missions that contains the socio-economic, geo-political and urban divisions of the city or region.
- c) Answer some questions about each neighborhood or region of the city, by visiting the religious centers, citizen associations, social projects, hospitals and other places of importance.
- d) Apply a quantitative research of the churches, noting their localities in the city so as to know where they are located and areas not reached by the churches.<sup>11</sup>

In research to understand the society to whom we go and with which we are working, some questions must be answered - how many are they, where are they, what are their means of subsistence, from where have they come, how are they organized, how do they relate to one another, which religion predominates, which other minority religions have most influence, how is their society organized in affinity and family groups.

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<sup>10</sup> Kimball, *They like Jesus, But Not the Church*, 7.

<sup>11</sup> Rubens Muzio, “The Implanting of Healthy Churches—the best strategy”, in *Christianity Today*, June 2005, Vol. 39 Issue 4, 63.



### 1.7.2 Church Planting and the *Missio Dei* (Mission of God)

Stuart Murray in his book *Planting Churches: Laying Foundations*, states that an adequate theological base or, to use his terminology, “a theological framework for church planting” will take into account three great categories namely; “*missio Dei*”, Incarnation, and the kingdom of God.<sup>12</sup>

By *missio Dei* or mission of God, Murray understands God’s mission in the world directed toward the world.<sup>13</sup>

According to David Hesselgrave, Paul considered the preaching of the gospel and the establishment of churches as his primary task. The biblical record leaves no room for thinking that either Paul or the members of his team were basically engaged in raising living standards, ameliorating social conditions, imparting secular knowledge, or dispensing aid from previously established churches. There can be no doubt that allegiance to Christ on the part of converts in the churches entailed these effects as by-products of faith even to the sending of needed aid back to the Jerusalem church (a kind of reverse flow). That the missionaries were concerned about social relationships, and about minds and bodies as well as souls, is patently true. But Paul’s primary mission was established when the gospel was preached, people were converted, and churches were established.<sup>14</sup>

All of this depends on our definition of the two words mission and missions. Since neither word comes from the Bible, one must see what meaning is given to each. For some evangelicals the word mission is preferred and is related to all that God is seeking to do in the world – the mission of God (or *missio Dei*). This concept implies that the

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<sup>12</sup>Stuart Murray, *Church Planting: Laying Foundations* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 2001), 40.

<sup>13</sup>Murray, *Church Planting: Laying Foundations*, 41.

<sup>14</sup>David J. Hesselgrave, *Planting Churches Cross-Culturally* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2000), 24.

focus on making disciples and multiplying churches is not a fully biblical view of mission (or missions).

A recent in-depth study of the question of mission and the Bible by Christopher J. H. Wright is entitled *Mission of God*.<sup>15</sup> In this book Wright seeks to see the Bible in the light of holistic mission. He calls his approach “a missiological hermeneutic of the Bible.”<sup>16</sup>

Second, Wright sees God as the initiator of mission and states in the epilogue that, “the only concept of mission into which God is the beginning, the center and the end . . . And the only access we have to that mission of God is given to us in the Bible.”<sup>17</sup> And along with this is the emphasis Wright places on mission as God’s work and not ours. In line with Wright’s thinking is what was stated at the beginning of his article and that is the role of God as the insider—he is the one doing the work.<sup>18</sup> We are only his instruments. So does this not lead to a false dichotomy that says it is either God or us? Or does a more careful exegesis of what evangelism and church planting mean lead to a more clear analysis of the wedding of the mission of God and church planting that is so needed as we continue into the 21st century? My other concern is that this may be leading us to too broad a definition of mission so that evangelistic church planting is placed on the same plane as anything done for God. In one sense this is true; however, if priorities are misplaced then what will happen to the biblical mandate to get the gospel out to the whole world?

One recent review of Wright’s book by Jim Reapsome shows his concern: Wright never disparages evangelism—in fact, he exalts it as an absolute necessity—but his advocacy

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<sup>15</sup> Christopher J. H. Wright, *The Mission of God* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2006), 47.

<sup>16</sup> Wright, *The Mission of God*, 47.

<sup>17</sup> Wright, *The Mission of God*, 534.

<sup>18</sup> Wright, *The Mission of God*, 534.

for engaging social, economic, and political issues will arouse controversy. It's worth asking: Just because something should be the concern of the church and all Christians should it be thrust under the rubric of mission? Wright's huge all-embracing umbrella of God's mission could renew fears that evangelism and church planting will be lost. If he seems to indicate that everything is mission, the risk is that nothing is mission in the end.<sup>19</sup>

### **1.7.2.1 The Incarnation and Church Planting**

In terms of the theological perspective of incarnation, Murray states that this influences church planting in two ways: "First, Jesus rather than the early church is the source of inspiration for church planters..." and "A second implication of incarnation is that God speaks to people through making his word flesh."<sup>20</sup> However, there are many who, although accepting the working of Christ in building his church through his servants, would say that Paul is God's "inspiration" or perhaps we should say model for church planters.

Bill Hull alerts us to the difference between what he calls "the Christocentric model" which was the way disciple-making was done when Christ was upon the earth and the "church ocentric model" where disciple making is accomplished within the body of the church and not done apart from church planting.<sup>21</sup> So without a doubt, church planting does need to be related to Christ's life and teaching as reflected in making disciples who reflect the Great Commission as recorded by Matthew.

### **1.7.2.2 The Kingdom of God and Church Planting**

To consider this theological perspective it will be necessary to clarify the relationship between the kingdom of God and the church. Murray states this correctly by stating: "A

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<sup>19</sup> Jim Reapsome, "Holistic Reach" in *Christianity Today*, June 2007, Vol. 51 Issue 6, 73.

<sup>20</sup> Murray, *Church Planting: Laying Foundations*, 46.

<sup>21</sup> Bill Hull, *The Disciple Making Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Revell, 1999), 34.

third theological perspective that might helpfully undergird church planting is the kingdom of God” but then he warns that “identification of church and kingdom is not justified biblically or contextually.”<sup>22</sup> The question of the relationship between the kingdom of God and the church is a vast one and it will not be possible to develop this question in this work. However, it may be profitable for 21st century church planters to think through Murray’s three perspectives to which will be added by George Eldon Ladd’s insights on the relationship between the church and the kingdom of God.

Murray states that “First, the church is a community; whereas the kingdom is an activity: God extending his rule throughout creation.”<sup>23</sup> If this theological insight is kept in perspective, Murray believes, churches will be planted that are not characterized by static but rather dynamic movement as “agents of this kingdom...on the move.”<sup>24</sup> George Eldon Ladd agrees stating that “the Kingdom creates the church. “The dynamic rule of God, present in the mission of Jesus, challenged men to response, bringing them into a new fellowship.”<sup>25</sup>

Second, the kingdom is broader than the church.”<sup>26</sup> According to him this means that the church gets a greater vision for action from “the implications of the kingdom.”<sup>27</sup>

Finally, Murray states that, third, the kingdom rather than the church defines the scope of God’s mission.<sup>28</sup> Ladd states in relation to this that “it is the church’s mission to witness to the Kingdom. “The church cannot build the Kingdom or become the Kingdom, but the

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<sup>22</sup> Murray, *Church Planting: Laying Foundations*, 46.

<sup>23</sup> Murray, *Church Planting: Laying Foundations*, 47.

<sup>24</sup> Murray, *Church Planting: Laying Foundations*, 48.

<sup>25</sup> George Eldon Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2000), 113.

<sup>26</sup> Murray, *Church Planting: Laying Foundations*, 48.

<sup>27</sup> Murray, *Church Planting: Laying Foundations*, 49.

<sup>28</sup> Murray, *Church Planting: Laying Foundations*, 49.

church witnesses to the Kingdom—to God’s redeeming acts in Christ Jesus both past and future.”<sup>29</sup>

Here, depending on how one interprets Ladd, it would seem that the redeeming acts in Christ Jesus are the scope of God’s mission. Again this would depend upon how one interprets God’s mission and refers us back to the relationship between church planting and the mission of God.

### **1.8 Significance of the Study**

The rapid growth of churches within the last two decades in the country makes it very imperative to analyze the concept of church planting and role that the evangelist has in the process of church planting. The relevance of this study is to contribute to the ongoing academic discourse on the issues of church planting.

This study also seeks to contribute to existing knowledge on this area of academic discipline. It will also serve as a good source of reading material and a guide to churches who want to embark on church planting activities. It will also help various evangelists to properly identify their roles in church planting activities.

Studies on the role of an evangelist in church planting, particularly with specific reference to the Gwira district of the western region will provide an extremely important glimpse of the role of the evangelist in church planting. As religious phenomenon it will help the people and academia to understand and analyse carefully how the office of the evangelist is important to church planting. It will help to understand and better appreciate the role of the evangelist in church planting activities.

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<sup>29</sup> Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament*, 113.

## **1.9 Organization of Chapters**

This work is organized under five chapters. Chapter one is the general introduction. It gives the background to the study, statement of the problem, research questions, aim and objectives of the study, research methodology employed literature review, and significance of the study. Chapter two looks at the concept of church planting. The chapter examines the concept and show the various approaches that are adopted in church planting. The chapter also examines who an evangelists is. The aim is to look at the role of the evangelist and situate it within a proper context of the study regarding his role in church planting.

Chapter three also focus on the historical background of the Gwira district with regards to mission work and church planting. The chapter gives a brief historical background of the district, highlight church planting activities take has taken place in the district some time ago. The aim is to discuss the main issues that underlies this study.

Chapter four basically dealt with the analysis and critique of the issues that emerges from the chapter three.

Chapter five which concludes the study gives summary, conclusions and recommendation.

## CHAPTER TWO

### THE CONCEPT OF CHURCH PLANTING

#### 2.1 Introduction

In order to be sure to have clarity in dealing with the concept “church planting” it will be appropriate to define the word church and the word planting with some preliminary remarks about the biblical context for the concept of “planting.” Therefore, in this chapter, the researcher attempts to explain the biblical concept of church planting and the biblical and theological underpinnings of the term church planting. This is to help both the researcher and the reader better understand term in relation to the context of this study.

#### 2.2 Understanding Church Planting

What is a local church? A local church is a “gathering” where the Triune God is present. “Is an assembly of Christians which comes about by God’s supernatural working and is composed of a group of baptized believers who meet regularly under the authority and teaching of God’s Word, celebrate the Lord’s Supper, and practice discipline according to biblical standards. This gathering has leaders who conform to God’s standards. They worship God, build one another up, and have a “yearning” for lost people to be saved and enfolded into their midst.”<sup>30</sup>

David Bosch understands that the Church at the end of the First Century had a clear comprehension of the need of the local church to communicate the Gospel in cities, provinces and the most remote regions among the gentiles.<sup>31</sup> Michael Green emphasizes that there was a change of perception about the evangelistic mission of the Church

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<sup>30</sup> Charles Van Engen’s study *The Growth of the True Church* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1981), 504. See also David J. Hesselgrave, “Essential elements of church planting and growing in the 21st century.” *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* 36 (January 2000), 25.

<sup>31</sup> David Bosch, *Transforming Mission* (New York: Orbis Books, 1996), 52.

immediately at the end of the first century when they perceived that Jerusalem was the cradle of the Gospel but not its center. Therefore, the first Christians began to have the feeling that the Church of Christ should spread the Gospel throughout the world by means of local churches.<sup>32</sup> Green also stressed that church planting was not only a systematic way to spread the Word of God, but mainly an objective need for spiritual survival, especially for those who were spread by persecution from Acts 8 up to the end of the second century.<sup>33</sup>

The Apostle Paul, more than any other, observed the need to not only evangelize distant areas, but also to plant, even in these remote areas, local churches that live Christ and speak in His name. Paul uses the expressions to plant (1 Cor. 3:6-9; 9:7, 10 e 11), lay foundations (Rom. 15:20, 1 Cor. 3:10) and give birth (1 Cor. 4:15) in referring to the planting of churches. According to Ronaldo Lidório, Bowers explains that Paul, in stating that he proclaimed the Gospel of Christ (Rom. 15:19), meant that churches have been planted in that entire region.<sup>34</sup> O'Brien, agreeing with Bowers says that 'to proclaim the Gospel for Paul, was not only the initial preaching or the harvest of some fruit. It included the whole series of activities linked to the maturing and strengthening of the converts with the intention of establishing them in new local churches.'<sup>35</sup>

So, one can argue or perceive that since the first century there is a deep connection between the proclamation of the Gospel and church planting, however the proclamation, in itself, does not assure the planting of churches. Hasselgrave stress that some more

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<sup>32</sup> Michael Green, *Evangelism - Now and Then* (Leicester: Intervarsity Press, 1979), 43.

<sup>33</sup> Michael Green, *Evangelism - Now and Then*, 45.

<sup>34</sup> Ronaldo Lidório, "The Concept of Church Planting" <http://www.churchplanting.com>. (Accessed on 5<sup>th</sup> June, 2015).

<sup>35</sup> Lidório, "The Concept of Church Planting", 2.



elements need to be put together to make sure people will not only hear the Gospel but they will come together to follow Jesus.<sup>36</sup>

According to Hesselgrave, to plant churches is the act of reproducing worshiping communities that reflect the Kingdom of God in the world through the proclamation of the living Gospel.<sup>37</sup>

### **2.3 Theological Foundations for Church Planting**

The Lord Jesus gave a parable to his disciples in which they could clearly discern the command, “Occupy till I come.” He amplified the significance of this in His Great Commission. God’s command to mission had already been formulated in His foreknowledge before the Creation. As its necessity arose by the fall in Eden, His plan for redemption was activated. It was revealed through His inspired Word by the eternal Holy Spirit and in the power of His Son, Jesus Christ, who “became flesh and dwelt among us.” He thereby identified Himself with humanity and communicated His message directly by word and deed. The object of His grace was mankind. His goal was to bring as many as possible to be the redeemed people of God.

His determined but flexible strategy tenaciously pursued this goal to procure their reconciliation, even though it meant the cross.

### **2.4 Biblical Theology of Church Planting**

Missiology and Theology should not be treated as separate areas of study, but as complementary disciplines. Theology does not only work with the Church to help the understanding and meaning of mission, but also provides biblical understanding to motivate evangelism and Church Planting. Missiology, on the other hand, leads

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<sup>36</sup>Hesselgrave, “Essential elements of church planting and growing in the 21st century.” 27.

<sup>37</sup>Lidório, “*The Concept of Church Planting*”, 2.

theologians to the redemptive plan of God and helps them to read the Scriptures with the presupposition that there is a purpose for the existence of the Church, understanding the Church ‘must be rooted both in the Person of God and the Mission of God.’<sup>38</sup> Hesselgrave, acknowledging the dangerous lack of a theological foundation in church planting studies states that ‘the evangelical commitment to the authority of the Scriptures is empty of meaning if we do not allow biblical teaching to mould our missiology.’<sup>39</sup>

According to Lidório, Van Engen emphasizes that theology of missions needs to be a multi-discipline area that reads the Scriptures with missiological eyes and ‘bases itself on this reading, continually re-examining, re-evaluating and redirecting the involvement of the Church in the *Missio Dei*, in God’s world.’<sup>40</sup> He again argues that Paul Hiebert explains that very often we choose a few biblical themes, and from these construct a simplistic theology instead of looking for the profound motives in all the Scriptures, and so presenting the missionary work without a solid theological foundation divorced from the mind of God.<sup>41</sup>

On the other hand Missiology is often swept out from the academic centers of the theological preparation in various parts of the world, or is, at least, treated as of less value. This terrible error frequently produces pastors without vision, unprepared missionaries and theologians whose knowledge could be greatly used for the needs of the Church that has its hands on the plough but does not know where to go. The divorce between Theology and Missiology is one of the principle causes of syncretism and liberalism in church planting.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>38</sup>Lidório, “*The Concept of Church Planting*”, 5.

<sup>39</sup>Hesselgrave, “Essential elements of church planting and growing in the 21st century.” 27.

<sup>40</sup>Lidório, “*The Concept of Church Planting*”, 5.

<sup>41</sup>Lidório, “*The Concept of Church Planting*”, 5.

<sup>42</sup>Lidório, “*The Concept of Church Planting*”, 7.

Reforming theologians like Luther, Calvin and Zwingli did theology in tune with the crying daily needs of a Church for biblical direction. John Knox came to declare that the Geneva of Calvin was ‘the most perfect school of Christ that there has ever been on earth since the time of the Apostles.’<sup>43</sup> Luther, when translating the Bible to the language of the people pursued the task of taking worship to everyone. The theological knowledge was serving God and the Church.

When Martin Kahler states that missiology is the mother of theology he tries to express that theology was developed while the message of Christ was declared. In other words, it was formed while the church planters reflected and worked in implementing God’s desire in different places and cultures (1 Cor. 3:6).<sup>44</sup>

According to Bosch, theology in the beginnings of the New Testament was practiced in the context of mission and in response to missiological questions while church planters spread the Gospel and feed the existing Church. The Apostle Paul is a classic example of this model.<sup>45</sup> When we analyze the teachings of Paul we understand that his ministry is based on his theological convictions, inspiring us to reflect on God and His action in the world (Rom. 15). Indisputably missiology and theology must give hands for the glory of God, for faithfulness to the Scriptures and the evangelization of the lost.

## **2.5 Theological Orientation for Church Planting**

Leslie Newbigin influenced world missiology tremendously by teaching that the Church could only have genuine renewal in its life and witness through a new encounter of Gospel with culture. Therefore, to provide answers for the missiological questions of today we must develop: a) Socio-cultural analysis; b) Theological reflection; c) Vision for the Church and its mission. The Church should present the Gospel in a relevant way,

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<sup>43</sup>Lidório, “*The Concept of Church Planting*”, 5.

<sup>44</sup> See Lidório, “*The Concept of Church Planting*”, 7.

<sup>45</sup> Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 14.

in the language of the people, and in a format that responds to the most disturbing questions of today's society.<sup>46</sup> It becomes necessary, therefore, that one reaffirm the biblical criteria for church planting. The researcher believes there are four criteria that are extremely relevant for Church planting done in faithfulness to Scripture.

The foundation of gospel communication should never be defined by what works, but rather by what is biblical (1 Thess 1:5). In church planting following what is biblical does not necessarily mean there will be greater results in terms of time-saving and numbers. Undergirding mission and church planting with sound biblical theology may require investment of time, patience and theological reflection, alongside national Christians. Murray explains that "All church planters operate within theological frameworks, but often these are assumed rather than articulated and adopted uncritically rather than as the result of reflection".<sup>47</sup>

Church planting is done in dependence on God's power and desire to save. Although there is a great need for training we should not expect to fulfill our mission merely through carefully elaborated strategies and well trained human resources. Nothing but God's power and activity can enable the Church spiritually to accomplish His plan in a relevant way in today's world. Church planting is not merely a matter of marketing, methodology and strategy. It is first a spiritual matter, characterized by the power of God released through the unique and historical sacrifice of Christ and undertaken through the enabling of the Holy Spirit, who guides the church to pray, believe and work (John 14:15-18).

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<sup>46</sup> Leslie Newbigin, *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society* (London: SPCK, 1997), 38.

<sup>47</sup> Stuart Murray, *Church Planting: Laying Foundations* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 2001), 15.

Church planting requires a clear understanding of the nature of the Church and God's purposes for it (ecclesiology), so that the long-term objectives guide the short-term strategy and vision. In particular we hope to plant churches as communities:

...of redeemed people, birthed by God, and belonging to God (1 Co. 1:1-2); ...of human, vulnerable people: men and women, parents, children, farmers and fishermen who live and breathe the Gospel wherever they may be (Matt.10); ...in the world, holy but not apart from it, not isolated or alienated (1 Co. 6:12-20); ...without borders, and it is therefore missionary by its very nature (Rom 15:18-19); ...with a witness and a gospel that makes sense both in and out of the church building (Jo 14:26; 16: 13-15); ...with the primary mission to glorify God (1 Co. 6:20; Rom 16:25-27).<sup>48</sup>

Furthermore, Church planting is done through proclaiming the Gospel. The “praxis” of church planting begins by proclaiming the Gospel, because the church is born where the word of God is powerfully at work. So proclamation is the non-negotiable foundation of church planting. For many in mission today, church planting itself has become the overriding focus of mission. But for Van Engen and Van Gelder the primary aim is making the Gospel known and experienced for people in their own context, thereby creating disciples of Christ; rather than building a physical, ecclesiastical structure, which, although important, is for them a secondary matter. In any case in some contexts a visible church may not be possible or permissible, but that does not limit the growth of the Kingdom.<sup>49</sup>

Missionaries may have good leadership, satellite communication, and good pastoral care structures, but they may not be simply proclaiming the fullness of the Gospel as the living Word of God. Although proclamation involves both word and deed, social involvement, holistic ministry and cultural understanding can never substitute for clear verbal teaching, nor in themselves justify the presence of the Church. Church planting envisages the creation of a viable, living and growing community which can itself be a

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<sup>48</sup>Lidório, “The Concept of Church Planting”, 5.

<sup>49</sup> See Charles Van Engen's study *The Growth of the True Church* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1981), 504.

powerful witness as a sign and instrument of the Kingdom. A living Church with a fresh experience of the Lord will be able in its turn to share the dynamic and powerful Word of God through its life, words and witness (John 16:13-15). The most profound value of a ministry of church planting must be to proclaim the Gospel. This means that only a church alive and passionate for Jesus will witness the dynamic powerful Word of God (John 16:13-15).

## **2.6 Conclusion**

This chapter has looked at the concept of church planting. The researcher basically dealt with an understanding of the concept of church planting by drawing out some biblical and theological foundations of the term.

In sum, the researcher can say that a better understanding of the concept will help evangelists and other people involve in church planting activities better develop and appreciate the certain basic issues in their attempt to embark on any church planting activity.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **CHURCH PLANTING AT THE GWIRA DISTRICT**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

Historically, the church since its existence has been engaging in evangelization and planting of churches for various centuries. This act of the church through various centuries has seen the expansion and growth of the church in many areas of the world. One of the purpose of the church has been an emphasis on personal evangelism and the training of leaders.

Specifically, this chapter looks at church planting in the Gwira area of the western region and the role of the evangelist in the process of church planting. The chapter also gives a brief historical background of the Gwira area. The aim here is to offer a historical perspective on what has taken place when it comes to church planting in the Gwira district. As part of this, the researcher focus on the mission and church planting work of some churches especially the Methodist Church in the district.

#### **3.2 Brief Background of Gwira**

Gwira area is part of western region of Ghana and is specifically located in the Nzema East Municipal Assembly. The Nzema East Municipal Assembly, with Axim as its capital, is one of the Twenty-Two (22) administrative authorities in the Western Region. The Nzema East Municipal Assembly was established by L I 1917 on 25th January 2008. It was formerly known as Nzema East District Assembly until it was split into two districts namely Nzema East Municipal Assembly and Ellembelle District Assembly.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> A Report for Nzema East Municipal Assembly Composite Budget For The 2015 Fiscal Year, <http://mofep.gov.gh/sites/default/files/budget/2015/Composite/WR/Nzema-East.pdf> (accessed on 12th June, 2015), 1.

The Nzema East Municipal Assembly covers a total land area of 2,194 sq km. which forms about 9.8% of the total land area of the Western Region. There are about 120 communities, the major ones being Axim, Nsein, Gwira, Bansa and Bamiankor. The Municipality has one Constituency namely the Evalue- Gwira.<sup>51</sup>

The population rate of the district constitute about fifteen thousand five hundred (15,500) people. Economically, people living in the area are less privileged, they lack basic social amenities such as good roads, portable water, and electricity among many others.<sup>52</sup>

The population of the municipal stood at 60,828 in 2010, constituting 2.6 percent of the Western Region's population. This figure is the lowest compared to the other twenty one Districts in the region. Sex Ratio is the ratio of males to females in a population. The Municipality has a slightly female dominant population per the 2010 Population Housing Census, 29,947, for males and 30,881 for females. That is, 50.8 percent for females and 49.2 percent for males. The Municipality's sex ratio is 97 males to 100 females. The relationship between population aged 0-14 years and 65 years and above and population aged between 15- 64 years constitutes Age Dependency, measured per 100 populations. The dependency ratio for Nzema East Municipality is 81.2 persons.<sup>53</sup>

Agriculture is the main economic activity in the Municipality in terms of employment and income generation, with about 65 percent of the economically active population engaged in agriculture (including fishing) and agro-processing, which constitutes the main source of house hold income in the municipal. The Municipality is a major player as far as marine fishing in the country is concerned. The Municipality is one of major

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<sup>51</sup>A Report for Nzema East Municipal Assembly Composite Budget For The 2015 Fiscal Year, 1.

<sup>52</sup>A Report for Nzema East Municipal Assembly Composite Budget For The 2015 Fiscal Year, 2.

<sup>53</sup>A Report for Nzema East Municipal Assembly Composite Budget For The 2015 Fiscal Year, 3.



fish producing areas in the region. Despite this potential, fishing activities are still based on traditional techniques.<sup>54</sup>

### **3.3 Religious Composition of Area**

In looking at the religious composition in the area, the researcher can argue that the Gwira area is religiously pluralistic. This is because, the area has different kind of religious people operating. These include Christians, Muslims, and traditionalists. Despite the fact that Christianity abound in the area, the Gwira area is highly composed of adherent of the African Traditional Religion. The researcher can argue that these religious composition sometimes seem to be a challenge in the propagation of the gospel in the area.

### **3.4 Mission Work in the Gwira District**

The term mission has not yet received any universal definition. Different people have given a varied definition of the term mission. However, as part of this study, the researcher understand mission as a “sign of the kingdom, in which evangelism, social action and the Spirit are presented and inseparably related.”<sup>55</sup> Similarly “... mission includes everything God’s Church continues to be and to do in the world and must be rooted in the character and purpose of God, its source and sustainer.”<sup>56</sup> From these definitions one may say that mission simply means sending the “Church into the world to serve, to heal, to preach and to liberate.”<sup>57</sup>

Gwira area has seen a lot of mission work by various groups of churches. Mission work in the area started as early as 1943 when the Methodist church was first established. The Sekondi Diocese of the Methodist Church Ghana used the Gwira area as a mission for

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<sup>54</sup>A Report for Nzema East Municipal Assembly Composite Budget For The 2015 Fiscal Year, 3.

<sup>55</sup> A. H.M Zahniser, *Symbol and Ceremony* (California: MARC., 1997), 185.

<sup>56</sup> Roger Bowen, *So I Send You*(London: SPCK., 1996), 72.

<sup>57</sup> C. Sugden, *Seeking the Asian Face of Jesus* (Oxford: Regnum Books, 1997), 341.

thirty six years, 1943-1979. As part of this missionary activities, The Methodist Church was established in almost every community in the Gwira area. This plan by the Methodist church also influenced other churches in the area to do the same. The Roman Catholic Church was also established in the area in the year 1956. Church of Pentecost was established in the area in the year 1979.

As at now, the researcher can say that there are about 42 established churches in the area including the ones established by the Methodist Church.

### **3.5 Establishment/Planting of Churches in the Gwira District**

The concept of “planting” a church seems to come from Paul’s concept of a new church beginning in Corinth. Speaking of this church planting, Paul states, “I planted, Apollos watered but God gave the growth” (1 Cor 3:6). The beauty of this description is that although church planting is done by God’s servants, the true work of church planting including growth comes from God. The first two verbs are in the aorist tense and the third verb in the imperfect. Charles Williams translates this, “I did the planting, Apollos did the watering, but it was God who kept the plants growing.”<sup>58</sup> Furthermore, in the light of recent linguistic study of what is now called “verbal aspect” in Greek it is learnt that the two aorist verbs emphasize the background whereas the imperfect verb emphasizes the foreground.<sup>59</sup>

What Paul is saying here is that if you look as an outside observer you see Paul and Apollos in church planting and watering but if you look with an insider’s viewpoint you see God. Now the context shows how true this is as Paul continues stating, “So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth” (1 Cor.

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<sup>58</sup>Charles B. Williams, *The New Testament* (Chicago: Moody Press), 365.

<sup>59</sup>Stanley E. Porter, *Idioms of the Greek New Testament*. 2nd ed. (London: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 23.

3:7). And this leads us to what is developing in church planting in the domain of understanding church planting theologically.

Church planting has been one of the activities embarked upon by most of the churches in the Gwira area. Many of the churches are involved in evangelism and church planting.

One issue that the researcher sees as a concern is that there has not been any active role by some churches with regards to the issue of evangelism in the district. Despite the fact that the Sekondi Diocese of the Methodist Church, Ghana took the area as a mission circuit, there is much work to be done in the district with regards to church planting.

Churches which have been established are the following; Methodist Church, Church of Pentecost, Catholic Church, Twelve Apostle Church, and SDA Church etc. Methodist Church was first planted in the area with the help of the late Reverend Samuel Kweku Asare, The twelve Apostles Church was established by John Nakaba through Prophet Wade Harris from Liberia. Catholic church was also planted in the area by Father Graves and the king of Bamiankor by the name Nana Kpongboyi, Church of Pentecost was planted through crusade by the mother church at Axim. With all these churches, many of the people there are still adherent of the traditional religion. This has been a challenge for mission work and evangelistic activities.

The only church which has a residence minister is the Methodist church.

### **3.6 The Roles Evangelists must play in the Planting of Churches at Gwira**

The word evangelism is derived from the Greek word ‘evangelion’, which means ‘good news’<sup>60</sup> Like the word ‘mission’, many have written about evangelism, but it is not always clear what the definitions are. The 1974 Lausanne Congress on World Evangelism defined evangelism as “To evangelise is to spread the good news that Jesus

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<sup>60</sup> A. Shorter, *Evangelization and Culture* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1994), 4.

Christ died for our sins and was raised from the dead according to the scripture; and that as the reigning Lord he now offers the forgiveness of sins and the liberating gift of the spirit to all who repent and believe.”<sup>61</sup>

Walter Brueggemann defines evangelism as a request to choose a new story, using the biblical story as the “definitional story of life and thereby authorizing people to give up, abandon and renounce other stories that have shaped their lives in false and distorting ways.”<sup>62</sup>

If evangelism is to be effective, there is the need to ensure that people are added to a Church. The aim of evangelism is the renewal and transformation of lives, not just to get people to pray the sinner's prayer. Salvation is a process that starts even before a person comes to Christ (through the drawing of the Holy Spirit) and continues after the decision is made to follow the Lord.

Church planting is very necessary in the context of evangelism because a new convert cannot function as a Christian apart from a local church, because this is the environment in which God has ordained for him to be nurtured and eventually find expression for his or her ministry. In this context, evangelism, one can say is a sub-set of church planting. The wider aim of the extension of the Kingdom of God includes church planting as part of it, especially in areas where there are none. Evangelism is actually incomplete without the planting of churches.

When evangelism occurs in an urban area, there are existing churches for new believers to join. However, when evangelism occurs in a rural setting there may not always be established churches to work with. The question is, what is to become of those who

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<sup>61</sup> J.D. Atkinson & Field, D. H. *New Dictionary of Christian Ethics and Pastoral Theology* (London: Inter-  
Varsity Press, 1995), 360.

<sup>62</sup> Walter, Brueggeman, *Biblical Perspective on Evangelism* (Nashville: Abingdon Press., 1993), 10.

accept the Lord in such a situation? The evangelist or those conducting the evangelistic effort are responsible for these new believers. How can helpless newborn babes be left to feed for themselves? It is essential that these people be placed in relational communities so that their spiritual lives can be nurtured.

The above questions really brings into bear the roles of evangelists in church planting in rural areas. One of the roles is that, the evangelist must ensure that churches are planted for new converts so that they can be nurtured and sustained for spiritual development and maturity in the Lord. In areas where there are established churches, the planting of new churches increases the rate at which people are reached. One example is that in a larger church which has reached a plateau in its growth. If this church makes an effort to plant new churches the Kingdom of God will be extended. At the same time more people will have the opportunity to become involved in ministry.

Most people who live in remote rural areas like Gwira do not have access to an established church. They either live too far from an existing church or they may belong to one of the many people groups that do not have a church witness in their midst. The evangelist need to ensure that churches are planted amongst groups that are reached with the gospel so that they will, in turn, reach out further to others. In this way the Gospel crosses barriers to those who may be beyond the reach of present evangelistic efforts. The Evangelists are to lead good moral life to challenge new converts in to the kingdom of God.

To add up, there is the need for the evangelist to disciple and train local leaders. In the bible, the believers of the New Testament were not only rapidly incorporated into the church, but were also discipled and trained as local leaders. The multiplication of the local leadership is proportional to the multiplication of the churches. A local church,

judged from the point of view of its growth, must be analyzed by the number and quality of leaders in training and not the quantity of members. Michael Green states that the discipleship training in the primitive church is directed to prepare men and women so that they might evangelize and plant new Christian communities.<sup>63</sup>

As the evangelist evangelize, they are able to identify those that desire to learn more. These are those that have a teachable heart, a thirst for the Word and a disposition to be with the Lord.

With such people, the evangelist can work in a systematic way for at least two years. Study the Word with them each week. Visit them at work and at home. Develop their friendship so that they have opportunity to open their hearts. Link them to some of his ministerial activities such as visitation and public evangelism. They can also be put into the daily life of the church, by given them responsibilities. The evangelist can keep close to them and also give them challenges: to give their testimony in public, to cooperate with some ministry of the church, to expound a biblical text in a small group.

### **3.7 Conclusion**

The chapter has looked at the church planting activities in the Gwira area and the role of the evangelists in church planting. The chapter also discussed activities of church planting in the area as well as mission work in the district.

The researcher therefore wish to conclude that despite the fact that a lot of work has been done in the Gwira area concerning church planting, there is still the need to further embark on missionary activities to plant more churches because the area still seems to be a grey area for mission work.

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<sup>63</sup> Michael Green, *Evangelism - Now and Then* (Leicester: Intervarsity Press, 1979), 81.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **DISCUSSING CHURCH PLANTING ACTIVITIES AND THE ROLE OF THE EVANGELIST**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter seeks to discuss and analyze major issues that emerge out of church planting and the role of the evangelist in such issues. The chapter looks at certain issues such as the impact of evangelism in church planting, effective strategies for church planting, characteristics of the evangelist in church planting among many others. The chapter analyze such issues through some interviews conducted and a critical observation that has been made by the researcher through his long years of service in church planting programmes.

#### **4.2 The Impact of Evangelism in Church Planting**

In this study, the aim has been to discuss the role of the evangelist in church planting in rural areas. Basically, the main aim of the evangelist is to ensure that members of a newly established church are well catered for in terms of feeding them with the gospel of Christ Jesus. One can argue that in church planting, those with a short term view of evangelism are only interested in getting people to make decisions to accept Christ.

In an interview with a reverend minister of the Methodist church, Reverend Emmanuel Oppong Fosu at Bamiankor indicated that, one of the most powerful ways for the process of evangelism to continue is to disciple those who have made decisions for the Lord. As discipling occurs, firm and stable believers who understand the importance of reaching

and discipling others are produced. According to him, in this context, the process of evangelism then becomes self-perpetuating.<sup>64</sup>

In an interview with one evangelist of the Methodist Church in the Sekondi-Diocese, Evangelist Juana Abban Haggan also indicated that “our Diocese needs to develop a philosophy of ministry that views evangelism task as incomplete if we lead someone to Christ and then leave them, especially if they are from a remote rural area where there is no church.”<sup>65</sup> From this view, there is the need for church to be committed to discipling new converts wherever the gospel is sent to. This should be done until the new converts can stand on their own feet and are gathered as a body of believers that is able to reproduce itself. One might argue that this process can be a daunting task for the church, the church must strive to accept all the opportunities that present themselves to by placing the evangelists in church to fulfill such roles. However difficult this might be, there is no doubt that as new believers are discipled and a church is established, they will in turn reach out to others and start new Churches which will care for themselves.

The researcher has also observed that when it comes to the work of evangelism in the diocese, there are two-fold cry of the diocese. The first is, we need finance and the second is, we need trained workers who understand the terrain. The researcher can argue that the second problem is without doubt the greatest challenge.

Workers in rural settings often labour in areas where the Church is either very young or nonexistent. As a result there is little or no Christian heritage to draw upon. In places where the gospel has been preached for many years, there is no shortage of people who have a basic understanding of Christian principles. People who serve in rural areas

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<sup>64</sup> Interview with Emmanuel Oppong Fosu, the superintendent minister of the Bamiankor Circuit, on 13<sup>th</sup> May, 2015.

<sup>65</sup> Interview with Juana Abban Haggan, Bethel Methodist Church, Takoradi on the 14<sup>th</sup> of April, 2015.



cannot compare the progress of their work with those places where there has been a strong Christian heritage.

### **4.3 Effectives Strategies for Church Planting**

The researcher want to analyze and discuss some effective strategies that an evangelist or a church can take into consideration in its attempt to embark on church planting in other to be successful on the field.

In looking at the issues that came up as part of the study, the first strategy to take into consideration is a demographic study of the place to plant the church. In an interview with an evangelist James Ayarikwah who comes from Bamiankor but station at Effiakuma circuit disclosed that “to try to reach people, evangelize them and group them into Christian communities, without understanding them, is to demonstrate arrogance and lack of wisdom. It is necessary to understand the local population before we approach it with the Gospel.”<sup>66</sup>

From the researchers own experiences, it has been realized that most people in rural communities exercise friendliness towards strangers. However, they do this without not exercising restrain in most cases. This is because, they seem to be very careful about what ‘strangers’ have got to offer them. They also, mostly hold their traditional believer which makes it very difficult for easy acceptance of the gospel.

On several occasion, the researcher has come across situations whereby some people in rural areas have resisted the propagation of the Gospel in their midst. In one instance, stones were thrown at members of an evangelism team in village during dawn broadcasting by religious group known as ‘Tigaare’ and some individuals in the town.

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<sup>66</sup> Interview with Evangelist James Ayarikwah, Effiakuma Circuit Takoradi, on the 12<sup>th</sup> of April, 2015.

In certain situation too, the researcher has observed that, some people who were not able to speak the local language of the people during evangelism especially the Nzema language had difficulty in trying to communicate the gospel effectively for people to understand and repent.

This implies that in order to have a successful church planting activity, evangelistic effort must be based on entry into the group, the learning of the language, the culture and the understanding of the worldview, its values and vital elements in relation to the understanding of sin, pardon and salvation. This will invariably call for a demographic research as a first strategy in the process of evangelizing a community and planting a church among them.

From the researcher's opinion developing a method of research, whether by a direct interviews or by active observation one can get to know the target group for church planting better. The aim here is to measure the group with which one intends to work, understand it socially and culturally, identify its distinct divisions and start evangelism with an approach that might be receptive, functional and clear.

A second strategy should be an intensive evangelism activity. Arguably, churches are not planted in missiological research centers. They are planted in the streets. In this context the quantity and constancy of evangelism becomes a fundamental action in church planting. On the mission field, either in culturally different or in geographically near situations, the amount of evangelism must be a constant practice. Some fields are not fruitful because they invest more time in missionary or ecclesiastical structuring and less on evangelism, and this is a danger for both our local churches as well as on more distant missionary fields.

With the researcher's own experience as an evangelist for some years now, it has been observed that the mission fields are always in terms of two categories, that is, the level of organization, and the level of evangelization. The level of organization basically deals with the presence of well-established missionary posts, good mobility with transport services, and a working system of communication between the missionary teams and cultural and linguistic supervision. On the other hand, the level of evangelization deals with the presence of personal evangelistic initiatives, multiple attempts of communicating the Gospel to the community with the use of literature and films etc.

In many situations the greatest number of churches are born and the greatest maturity was found in the fields with greater evangelism, even when it was to the detriment of mission organizational aspects. Only on the fields with constant evangelism was there visible fruit.

In spite of having a clear recognition that only evangelism leads people to Christ, evangelists can entangle themselves in various and many daily activities in the desire to plant a church but lose the principal focus to present Christ.

The third strategy is the Communication of a Christ-centered Gospel. Constant evangelism, on the other hand, is only a strategic functional element if the content of the evangelism is the Word of God. Here the evangelist need to remember that one of the greatest errors in church planting is to treat the Gospel as a project. The Gospel is not a project. It is Christ. And therefore, it is the Word of God, news of the Person of Christ, His life and mission that converts hearts. In spite of believing that it is necessary for a church planter to be disciplined and organized one cannot fall into the error to treat the Gospel and its proclamation in a managerial and logistic manner.

There is the need to revise the content of our evangelistic efforts, because in most situations people are seen moving away from the centrality of Christ to the exposition of the church. In the researcher own observation it has been realised that many evangelistic initiatives that promote the church, its environment of security, morality and fellowship, and especially its service to others, but they do not present Christ run the risk of packing churches with people linked to a service that values the family and encourages moral living and nothing else.

The church must remind itself of what is central to New Testament missiology. The central point of New Testament Missiology is evangelism and evangelism is the act of proclaiming the Gospel. It is therefore imperative to examine and understand better this Gospel, seeing it as the content of our evangelism.

To add up, there is the need for discipling and training local leaders. The believers of the New Testament were not only rapidly incorporated into the church, but were also disciplined and trained as local leaders. The multiplication of the local leadership is proportional to the multiplication of the churches. A local church, judged from the point of view of its growth, must be analyzed by the number and quality of leaders in training and not the quantity of members.

#### **4.4 Assessment of some Models for Church Planting**

Evangelism and discipleship are two elements that need to work together in balance. If the first is emphasized to the detriment of the second we would have churches full of people interested in the Word, but with few really converted and mature in Christ. With the opposite emphasis we would have a small group of believers, mature and firm in the faith, but living in a static congregation without the addition of new people to the Christian faith.

Discipleship training is the best process to identify the future of local leadership. A church planter must identify among his disciples those that are leaders. In these he must invest effort so as to train them for leadership. Beyond the study of the Word, they can develop the skills of learning how to evangelize, and in the solution of conflicts.

The election or appointment of local leaders is an important step and must be carried out while making sure it is of believers that are faithful to God, with knowledge of the Word and who have already had their faith tested.

The church must bear in mind that every large church planting movement that becomes permanent in a region counts on the strong involvement of local people right from the beginning. The investment in local people, passing to them the vision, passion and strategies will guarantee a process of church planting that goes on beyond that of the missionary or evangelist. It will go on beyond its own generation too. The church must not measure how solid a project of church planting is by the number of people involved or the structure constructed for it. But the church, should measure it by the quantity and quality of local people that are being discipled and prepared for leadership and growth.

The reproduction of planted churches in a second phase idealistically must be done by means of the fruit and not from the root of the movement. In this stage the evangelists must be in a position of supervision of the vision and of encouragement, and not in the front line. Churches should plant churches. This process must be based on the missionary model that suggests that: begin, disciple, reproduce, assist, encourage, leave and supervise.<sup>67</sup>

With an inference from this, one can argue that to build churches with missionary minded zeal in minds of the people, it is necessary to invest in teaching the Word and in

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<sup>67</sup> John Piper, *Let the Nations Be Glad!* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1993), 11.

experience of evangelism. Evangelism appeals, statistics or stories do not develop missionary zeal in a local church. It is necessary to merge two transforming elements: The teaching of the Word and experience of evangelism. It is necessary to preach the biblical evangelism mandate. To expound with clarity what the mission of the church is about. To demonstrate ones responsibility towards the world, with biblical evidence. It is necessary also to lead the church to experience mission and evangelism. The evangelist must take them to the streets, the street corners, markets, the remote places and where they can speak openly of Jesus, share their faith, and evangelize the lost. The teaching of the Word and the experience of evangelism linked together are the two constructive elements to develop a missionary zeal in a local church.

#### **4.5 Some of the most common errors in church planting**

The researcher has observed that, as part of the church planting process, some evangelists or missionaries unintentionally miss the focus of the church planting. One of the common errors is to treat the planting of a church in a purely managerial way. Church Planting is a spiritual activity that requires a life with God and the Word of God. The managerial method compromises the spirituality and focuses on the activities of human groups.<sup>68</sup> The result, common in various situations, is a church that is large but shallow. A generation of movements with great social mobilization, but little commitment to God.

An evangelist or a church planter must start in the streets, houses or huts, public places, radio and TV stations, universities and primary schools, in the luxury apartment blocks and in the poorest area of the town, that is, wherever there are people who have not given themselves to Jesus. This, if done with great enthusiasm will go a long way to help establish churches that are strong in the faith and having the desire to continue the work of the ministry.

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<sup>68</sup> Wright, *The Mission of God*, 68.

#### **4.6 Characteristics of an Evangelist**

Among the various characteristics of an evangelist are the following, first of all, they are people of prayer. They realize that only God can convict and convert and they are totally depend on God in prayer.

Secondly, they are people who spend time in the word of God. The more time they spend in the Bible the more likely they are see the lostness of humanity and the love of God in Christ to save those who are lost.

Thirdly, Evangelist are compassionate people. Their heart breaks for those who do not have personal relationship with Jesus Christ. They learn to love the world by becoming more like Christ who has the greatest love for the world.

They love the communities where God has place them. They are immersed in to the culture because they desire for the light of Christ to shine through them in the communities.

Lastly, they are accountable to someone for their evangelistic activities. They know that many good activities can replace Great Commission activities if they are not careful.

The Evangelist vision determines ones attitudes and initiative. To begin the Church Planting project without a defined vision is like starting a journey without a route and a destination. The lack of a definite vision will not only undermine the work of an evangelists or church planter but impedes creating cooperation from others for his vision.

A definite vision will eventually suggest goals, plans, strategies and approaches, but to maintain the vision is the fundamental element without which no ministry will be able to sustain itself for very long. Thus, it will be appropriate to argue that the evangelist must seek and follow God's vision. The evangelist must know very well that not every vision

of a man of God is necessarily the vision of God. Therefore, it is important to seek and follow God's vision. And when the Lord transmits it into the hearts one will lead to incarnate it, live it, and influence others for such a vision.

Maybe one's vision is to see local leaders trained in the Bible for the church. Or to see the gospel reaching a certain tribe. Perhaps, another vision is to see an orphanage helping those who are without hope. However, the researcher is of the opinion that we don't give ourselves entirely to a work, project or challenge if we don't have a strong and clear vision in our minds and hearts. One has to determine the vision he or she has for any community he works.

In church planting, the evangelist's identification with the people is not merely a consequence of sociological empathy starting from an understanding of a human segment with which the church activity is done, but it is a passion involving the heart and soul. The researcher for instance do not share in the idea of church planters that do not have a personal involvement with their goal people; who do not live among them; who do not feel their joys and sorrows, who do not anguish to perceive the effect of sin in their lives. Who do not know their dreams and do not dream the same dreams.

The identification with the people is a process produced from living with the people. That is, because one were not born there, it is necessary to live together with them so as to gain this identification.

It is necessary also to think about the church planter from the biblical-theological viewpoint of the ministerial call. In Ephesians 4:11 the apostle Paul teaches us that the Lord called in His church men for defined ministerial roles for the building up of the Body, using here five categories: apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. It is important for us to draw some textual conclusions at this point.



The apostle, from the verb *apostelo* indicates one who is sent. It refers historically to those that were sent out by Christ for the expansion of His church. We are able to understand an apostle, in the sense of a functional call, as being someone attracted to the lost. His desire is to announce Christ and he does it with joy in his heart. When he arrives at a field he casts the Gospel everywhere. When the church is born his heart already starts to be awakened to have an interest in other more distant places, drawn by the masses of the unreached, always thinking of new places to go, to a new field in which to sow.<sup>69</sup>

Church planters are persons called by God to expound the Gospel where it has not yet arrived and has not borne fruit. It would be ideal to think that in one project of church planting there could be a team with brethren with all these five different functions. In practical terms I think that many ministries are poorly led in respect to the workers' callings; at times for lack of ideal opportunities, or at times for lack of orientation.

#### **4.7 Holy Spirit and Church Planting**

It is very important that just as the church recognizes the role of the evangelist in church planting, the active role of the Holy Spirit as the builder of the church will not also be ignored.

Here, the question that people might ask, what is the relationship between the expansion of the gospel and the person of the Holy Spirit? Which are the criteria for a Church, full of the Spirit to involve itself with the expansion of the Gospel of the Kingdom?

In a broad summary this relationship could be observed in three distinct, but inter-related areas. Firstly through the essence of the Person of the Spirit and His function in the Church of Christ. Secondly by the essence of the Person of the Spirit and His function in

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<sup>69</sup>Hesselgrave, "Essential elements of church planting and growing in the 21st century." 40.

the conversion of the lost. Finally by the clear connection between historic revivals and the missionary advance. The essence of the Person of the Spirit and His function in the Church of Christ.

In John 14:16-17 Jesus promises to send us a Comforter, that is the Holy Spirit, and He would come over the Church in Acts 2 in a permanent manner. There the Church would be clothed in power. The Greek term used for 'Comforter' is 'parakletos' and literally means 'to be alongside'. It is a term made up of two parts: The preposition 'para' - at the side of – and 'kletos' from the verb 'kaleo' which means to call. Therefore we see here that the Person of the Spirit, as the fulfillment of God's promise, dwells with the Church, called to be alongside for the purpose of God.

The essence of the Person of the Spirit and His function in the conversion of the lost. We believe that it is the Holy Spirit who convinces man of his sin. The natural man knows that he is a sinner, but only with the intervention of the Spirit does he begin to feel lost. Therefore in every presentation of the Gospel, if the Holy Spirit does not convince the man of sin and judgment our exposition of the truth of Christ will be no more than a human argument (1 Thess. 1:5).

A planted church is not as the result of human ability or correct methodology but a fruit of the action of the Spirit that convinces man of sin and judgment. The dependence on the action of the Spirit is, therefore, the necessary and fundamental condition for us to dream of seeing churches being born, in Christ and for God.

#### **4.8 Conclusion**

In all, this chapter has looked at various issues that emerges out of church planting activities and the role that the evangelist has to play in some part has also been discussed. The chapter touched on issues such as the effective strategies for church planting, assessment of some Biblical model for church planting and characteristics of the evangelist in church planting. The researcher wants to conclude that, the evangelist or the church planter must recognize his or her role that any call to serve in the planting of a church must be done in a greater zeal for the expansion of the work of Christ and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 Summary**

This study has looked at the role of the evangelist in church planting in rural area focusing primarily in the Gwira area of the western region. This study employed a phenomenological and historical approach. These methods were used to analyze the phenomenon of church planting and to historically look at the background history of the area under study as well as church planting activity that has been embarked on the area before. The first part of this study looked at the background issues and related literature of the subject under study.

The work also looked at the concept of church planting. This was done in order to clarify the concept for the purpose of this study. The study again explained the biblical concept of church planting and the biblical and theological underpinnings of the term church planting. This was to help both the researcher and the reader better understand term in relation to the context of this study.

The work also looked at various activities in church planting, the role of the evangelist in the church planting process. Specifically, there was an attempt to look at the church planting in the Gwira area of the western region and role of the evangelist in the process of church planting. The study also touched on certain issues such as the impact of evangelism in church planting, effective strategies for church planting, characteristics of the evangelist in church planting among many others.

## 5.2 Conclusion

In looking at the issues that have been raised in this study, there are a number of conclusion that the researcher can draw from the issues raised in the study. Holistically, the work has looked at the church planting and the role of the evangelists. The study tried to bring out points which can help for better understanding of the concept of church planting by drawing out some biblical and theological foundations of the term that will go a long way to help the evangelist and all practitioners develop a better attitude and approach to church planting.

In observing a number of church planting activities, the researcher came to the following findings and conclusion as some of the factors that contribute a lot to make a church planting process to fail or succeed. Some of these points from the researcher's own perspective include;

- a) The difficulty to distinguish church planting from church building, so losing the value of discipleship and creating more investment in the structure rather than people. There is the need to focus on feeding the converts who are drawn into the church through evangelism during church planting with the word of God than to focus more on church building. This is however, not to say that building church structures for worship are not important but it must not be done to the detriment of the spreading the message of salvation.
- b) The delay of introducing the converts into the daily life of the Church, so diluting the value of communion and integration as well as creating immature believers, without tasks, challenges and involvement.
- c) The absence of social and cultural sensitivity, therefore preaching the Gospel without meaning to the receiving context. A message alienated from the reality of

life sometimes makes people alienated and don't feel part of the community of Christ.

### **5.3 Recommendations**

Looking at the issues raised, the researcher wish to make the following conclusions;

- The researcher recommends that evangelists who embarked on church planting in the rural areas should be supported with funds to enable them have a successful church planting.
- Evangelists sent to Gwira area for church planting activity especially those from the Methodist Church should be trained properly. Seminars and workshop should be organized to equip them for the ministry.
- Most of the churches planted at Gwira lack expertise to teach the new converts, there is the need for churches to train more evangelists to cater for the needs of the people.
- Again, churches should embark on demographic study on areas where churches are to be planted to enable them have fore knowledge about the people and communicate the gospel to them very well in their own context. With this, the researcher recommend that people who can fluently speak in the Nzema language should be mostly send to the Gwira area since they can communicate well with the people.

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## **PERSONALITIES INTERVIEWED**

Rev. Emmanuel Oppong Fosu, the superintendent minister of the Bamiankor Circuit, on 13<sup>th</sup> May, 2015.

Evangelist Joana Abban Haggan, Bethel Methodist Church, Takoradi on the 14<sup>th</sup> of April, 2015.

Evangelist James Ayarikwah, Effiakuma Circuit Takoradi, on the 12<sup>th</sup> of April, 2015.

## APPENDIX I

### INTERVIEW QUESTION

Dear Sir,

#### **PERMISSION TO CONDUCT AN INTERVIEWS**

I am Asare Justice from Christian Service University College Kumasi, Theology Department.

In other to Graduate from University, I am to write a long essay, which is titled, *The Role of Evangelist in Church Planting in Rural Areas of the Gwira District of the Western Region of Ghana*. I therefore write to interview you as leaders of the churches in Gwira area. I know this letter will be favourable considered.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully,

Justice Asare

## **APPENDIX II**

### **STRUCTURE FOR INTERVIEW**

#### **SECTION A: DATA ON THE CHURCH AT GWIRA DISTRICT**

1. Can you tell me the name of your church?
2. What is your position in the church?
3. How long have you serve in that capacity?
4. Do you know when the churches were established?
5. If you do, can you tell me how this church was established and about some of your challenges and expectation?
6. What is the current state of the affairs of the church?
  - i. Members
  - ii. Infrastructure
  - iii. What is the responsibility?
7. What is the leadership structure of your church?

#### **SECTION B**

1. Do you know the founders of churches in Gwira district?
2. How long have you served as a minister or evangelist in the churches at Gwira area?
3. Can you describe some of the activities of the church?
4. What are the challenges of the church?
5. Can you mention some of the founding members?